

Point Three

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The monthly magazine of TOC H



Point Three

Editor: Colin Rudd

Editorial Assistant: Barbara Martin

Designer: Sybil A Chick

Letters, articles and news items are welcomed, and should be addressed to the Toc H Editorial Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (Telephone: 0296 623911)

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

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Toc H is a Movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is the group — at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood — which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Rev P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

Sister Bridget Mary, CSMV, in the Chapel at the Royal School of Church Music with the new cross she has made.

Editorial

Something to offer?

For years now a division has been growing in our society. It's a division which, 25 years ago was unimaginable. Then we had full employment, a bold series of developments was bringing an end to poor housing, the standard of education was rising steadily with more young people going on to further education than ever before. Of course, there were problems, but hope seemed to rise above them all. Were we not, after all, creating a fairer society with greater freedoms for the individual? New technology was already bringing unthought of benefits and advances. The launch of Telstar had signalled a new era in communications, and it seemed as though even the wildest dreams of science fiction writers had fallen short of what the reality would be.

It has become fashionable to see the 60s as the source of all our present troubles, as though they were all irresponsibility and carelessness. The fact is that the change has been so dramatic that we would blame almost anything on anybody — and we do. The 60s, the Arabs, immigrants — the list is long. But no matter where the fault lies — and blame here is surely pointless — the fact remains that we now calculate unemployment in millions, housing is still inadequate, even unavailable, for tens of thousands and our education system, if not in chaos, is in serious disarray. Inner cities face terrible problems of deprivation, racial tension and crime.

Four years ago the Archbishop of Canterbury set up his Commission to investigate the problems of Urban Priority Areas (UPA's), and in September 1985 it produced its report. The members of the Commission were not naive idealists. They knew, or thought they knew, the kinds of things they might expect to find, yet in their introduction to the Report the wrote, *'We have to report that we have been deeply disturbed by what we have seen and heard'*. They go on to talk about places where over 50% of the labour force is out of work (a figure which sometimes rises as high as 80%). They found people whose housing was so awful that they had set fire to it rather than be condemned to live in it any longer. Social disintegration had reached the point where shops were boarded up, cars could not be left on the street, residents were afraid to go out or to let anyone in, even in daylight. In many areas all this was compounded by racial discrimination, *'and'*, they say, *'there is a pervading sense of powerlessness and despair'*.

Such problems as these cannot be solved overnight, nor can any government change things simply by good intentions and legislation. Of course, government attitude is important, and it does begin to look as though we might be about to witness a welcome change. But we, too, have a contribution to make. One of the recurring themes in the early chapters of the report is the need to establish groups which will help to bridge the gaps both within UPA's and between UPA's and the wider community. Here, surely, we have something to offer. From the very beginning Toc H set out to break down the barriers which people erected between themselves. That has not happened by accident but by deliberate design. So we know that it's not easy to do, that it doesn't just happen that folk are able to meet each other at a level far deeper than the merely superficial. We have set out, from the beginning, to create a conflicting, views about their faith. We have deliberately drawn in those for whom any formal faith means little. We have, at our best, made sure that as far as possible, all sections of our community have been represented in our Branches, not waiting for them to come to us, but going out to find them because we knew we needed them, and because we could offer them something worthwhile. It is almost as though the last 70 years has prepared us to meet these urgent and still fresh needs which have grown up in our midst.

Of course, we will not solve all the problems of Urban Priority Areas, but unless we try we shall not make even the smallest contribution to any of the solutions. And our respect for each other because they have begun to learn to meet then it will be worth whatever the cost might be. We do, indeed, have something to offer, but if we stay hidden in 'comfortable Britain' then we shall have become that bit more irrelevant, and will have taken one more step towards the end of Toc H.

The Freedom of the Skies

Paul Rogoff

Mencap has recently held a national fund raising event in order to enable them to help to make life easier and happier for people with a mental handicap. As part of that event Walsall Toc H Branch agreed to sponsor me and my 16 years old son Simon for a 2,000 foot parachute jump.

Finding other sponsors proved to be relatively easy. For example, one of the Branch, Harry Morris who is an ex-paratrooper, offered to help, and quickly raised £85 on just one sponsor sheet! Another contact found us sponsors inside the local prison. District Branches made a contribution, together with two local branches of the Loyal Order of Moose. In addition, neighbours, colleagues, school friends and surprised teaching staff contributed quite generously.

The day of the jump dawned. As we set off for a small wartime airfield in Worcestershire we knew that there would be much to do. All novices have to undergo a basic parachute ground training course. For this we were joined by the day's other would-be jumpers, and instruction was given by experts from the British Parachute Association.

Before the jump could take place the wind speed had to drop below 10 mph – and this it resolutely refused to do all that Saturday! As evening drew on it became clear that, if we were to make our

jump successfully, we would have to stay the night – and staying that night meant staying in the control tower. This provided an unexpected bonus in that we were able to dine with several of the parachute club staff and so to learn more about a growing sport.

As Sunday went by the winds dropped. We donned our parachutes – the main one a modern ex-NATO steerable parachute harnessed to our backs, and the other a fast acting emergency chute attached to our waist. Duly loaded up we climbed aboard a twin-engined Islander aircraft, and together with half the course of eight, our pilot and our scarlet clad, sharp-eyed and sharp-witted jump master, John, we ascended into the evening air over the Worcestershire countryside. Our aircraft had been air-conditioned by the simple expedient of having had its side door removed (so that we could get out more easily) and we were treated to awesome and spectacular views as it banked, climbed and circled to gain altitude.

The course which we went on was open to men and women between the ages of

16 and 50. Apart from the basic instruction in parachuting it provided a confidence and trust building experience, and it's safe, exhilarating and character forming. Complete teams of jumpers are encouraged to take part. And what about the weather? Of course, it can delay your jump – as it did ours – and it may hold things up for more than 24 hours. All sorts of other things can happen, too, which may prevent a jump taking place at the planned time. However if that should happen to you all is not lost. There is a firm arrangement that if parachutists are unable to complete their first jump on the due date they may return whenever the club is open and will be given priority as first jump students.

Several organisations are now involved in this method of fund raising. There is surely scope for Toc H Branches and volunteers to take advantage of the goodwill of parachute clubs around the country to raise funds for the Movement or for their own local activities. If you would like to have more information, get in touch with Parachute Promotions (021 704 4759) and they will be glad to help.



Photos: Brian Stevenson

Round and about

The Day We Went to Clacton

Ipswich Men's Branch of Toc H held their annual outing for the elderly housebound of the town, taking them to Clacton-on-sea on Saturday 6 June. Members of the Clacton Women's Branches worked hard preparing a tea for the party of 90 which included the car drivers who very kindly offered their services to support Toc H with this venture. Other kind supporters, and members of Toc H, entertained the assembled party before they were driven home through the Constable countryside.

Maundy in Melton

We're all familiar with the annual Maundy Thursday service in which the Queen distributes Maundy money to a group of elderly people. What doesn't hit the headlines is the annual giving of Maundy gifts by the Melton Mowbray Ladies Branch. For 25 years now they have been presenting gifts to hospital patients in Melton's local hospitals. That meant a total of 176 gifts this year. It sounds like an imaginative project which must mean a great deal to everyone involved.



Photo: Melton Mowbray Times

At home in Nailsea

It seems that several Toc H Branches are blessed with interesting, even historic, meeting places. The article about Hoddesdon (April Point Three) prompted John Worthington to write to tell us about Nailsea Branch. Now, Nailsea is in Avon and they also meet in an interesting place. But, like Hoddesdon, what is really interesting is the use which the community makes of their house. John says that some weeks more than 1,000 people pass through the doors – and I should think that not many Branches can say that! As any householder will know, property is expensive to maintain – and generally speaking the more interesting a property the higher the bills! 'But', says John, *'the entire project is self-supporting'*. And he adds, wisely, *'various options for the future are constantly being considered'*.

The list of activities and of groups using the house is long and varied, ranging from a Horticultural Society to the local Baptist Church to a toy library – and, of course, Toc H itself. As John says, *'we believe that Toc H in Nailsea will continue to operate well into the future'*. Certainly sounds like it.

Sleeping Better?

If, when you go to Talbot House in Poperinge, you find that you're sleeping better, then thank Bert Hill and his friends. The appeal which was launched last autumn to supply new beds for the Old House is almost complete. Twenty three new beds are in – and paid for with the help of a small loan. There are only three more beds to go. Together with the loan to be repaid the appeal needs another £880, so if you, or your Branch, haven't contributed yet then don't miss your chance – time's running out! Send your contribution to: Bert Davies Court, Undrechill, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire SK6 4QP. Cheques payable to A Hill Toc H A/C. And sleep well!

Help the Aged

Help the Aged has published a free advice leaflet about tenancy rights for elderly people living in privately rented accommodation.

John Mayo OBE, Director General of Help the Aged said *'a large number of elderly people in the UK live in privately rented accommodation and sadly, many of them have to put up with very poor housing and experience difficulties with their landlords. Help the Aged's leaflet explains what their rights are and where to get advice if they need it'*.

People receive different protection in law according to the type of tenancy they have. The Charity's leaflet gives guidance on differing tenancy rights, provides information on how to get repairs done and outlines the benefits to which elderly tenants may be entitled.

'Your Rights as a Private Tenant' is available free from: Help the Aged, Freepost TR, London EC1B 1BD.

A Busy Year in Salcombe

Salcombe Ladies Branch, down in South Devon, seems to have had a busy and fulfilling year, if their annual report is anything to go by. Support to Lindridge House and fund raising for the National Trust have been followed by a determined and successful effort to see that, when the EEC was sharing out some of its cheese and butter mountains earlier in the year, their area didn't miss out! Modesty forbids that I tell you their age – but they are not a new, young group. Neither do they have any transport between them, but they don't seem to have let that stop them!

A Double Half Century

Bob Harvey and Alf Haywood, who both belong to Llanarmon-yn-Ial Branch, have each recently celebrated 50 years of membership of Toc H. The Branch celebrated this splendid 'double' in grand style with a hot-poker supper, complete with candles and wine, and a blazing log fire to make the occasion truly festive. We're glad to add our own congratulations.

Sink or Swim

Elsewhere in this issue Paul Rogoff from Walsall commends the idea of sinking gently to earth by parachute as a means of raising funds. Derek Smith, chairman of Springfields District, says that sponsored swims can still be pretty effective. New Addington Branch has just raised £1,000 for local hospitals with a sponsored swim, so if you can't stand heights, and if the mere thought of jumping out of an airplane does for you what it does for me . . . !

Things seem to have been pretty lively elsewhere in the Springfields District too, with parties and guest nights (how good to find that they still go on!) as well as jumble sales and regular meetings.

50 Years in Hemel Hempstead

Congratulations to Hemel Hempstead Men's Branch on achieving their first half century. It has been a very busy 50 years, with all kinds of activities and service to the community. Some of those things were recalled when the Branch celebrated its Golden Jubilee recently when one of the founder members spoke at a large gathering in St John's Hall in Hemel Hempstead. At the service of Rededication two of the hymns sung had been used at the service 50 years previously when the new Branch had been given its lamp. Jimmy Neilly, who wrote to us about the event, says that the Branch has something to hand on to those who will follow them over the next 50 years.

Calling Lecky Lake Veterans

Avid readers of the Project Booklet, and students of the 'Forthcoming Events' column in these pages will no doubt be aware that the headline 'Last Chance at Lecky Lake' has clearly not always meant what it said! However, we are reliably informed that the project is coming to an official end on the weekend of 11 - 13 September. This will not be an occasion without its due ceremony, and John Mitchell, instigator and original lake digger, now risen to higher things (well, a

bit higher, anyway) will be there to declare the lake well and truly wet! The weekend will feature all kinds of fun and games - and, says Patsy Ferguson and Peter Sturgess 'we'll be moving mud too! So bring old clothes and wellies.'

Patsy and Pete will be glad to relieve you of £6 for the weekend. This includes a free commemorative Lecky Lake T-shirt! Please make your cheque payable to Toc H and send it with a request for further information to: Patsy Ferguson, The Forge, Burghill, Hereford HR4 7RX. And do it quickly!

Strode Park Family Day

John Mitchell was the guest speaker at Strode Park and Herne Branch annual Family Day on 14 June.

At this event the Branch invites members from a wide area to be its guests at a get together at Strode Park Home for the Disabled, where the Branch is based.

A good gathering of visitors from many parts of the South-East enjoyed a pleasant day which included the opportunity to see the pleasant grounds of the Home.

John emphasised in his address the ability of the individual to change change things and to touch the life of others through Toc H.

Branch chairman Bob Pearman presided and guests included Roger Gale MP, Councillor Gomm (Sheriff of Canterbury) and the Rev and Mrs 'Polly' Perkins, retired South-East padre.

A programme was given by the Nimbus Dance Group and a service was conducted by Branch secretary Ruby Holmes, a lay reader, at which the speaker was the Rev Leslie Howitt, a retired prison chaplain.

Oh to be in Alfreton . . .

'There were about 60 in the congregation at the Mid-Eastern Gathering in the beautiful St Martin's Church, Alfreton', writes Gordon Ecob. The service began with an organ recital by Lindsay Bush, a Branch member in Alfreton, and it was introduced by Jim Bush, who is the Branch Pilot there. The preacher was the Rev Geoffrey Marshall, who is the Vicar of Spondon and Religious Advisor for Radio Derby. His topic was 'The Value of Work'.

This was followed by a picnic tea in the church vestry and garden. The guests went on to Alfreton Hall Adult Education Centre, a 17th century country house, to be entertained by St Peter's Players from Ravenshead, which everyone enjoyed very much.

It was a good afternoon and evening of fellowship thanks to all the organisation by Alfreton Branch.

Meanwhile, in Milton Keynes . . .

The Wolverton and Stony Stratford Twigs have taken to water. Elaine, Cathy and Phil managed to swim a grand total of 83 lengths in relay in one hour, which helped to raise £200 for the Bucks Association for the Blind.

Week of Prayer for World Peace 18 - 25 October

It is more clear than ever, after 14 years of the Week of Prayer for World Peace, that prayer for peace is vital and influential. A great impetus was given last year by the wonderful initiative of the Pope in calling all religions to join him at Assisi in praying for peace. The fellowship thus created, as well as by other initiatives such as by the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the International Association for Religious Freedom, the World Congress of Faiths, and not least by the Week of Prayer for World Peace itself, has drawn together people of all religious faiths into a deepening sense both of their common humanity and of their destiny as divinely created beings. This great movement of the spirit transcends all barriers of nationality and language, reducing the dominance of merely political issues in international relationships and offering the hope of the emergence of a global human community where peace and justice will prevail.

Our week always includes United Nations Day, 24 October, and in the spirit of Assisi we plan to hold our annual Inaugural Service at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 17 October 1987 at 3.30pm. As usual, representatives of all faiths will make a short affirmation to peace and human unity, and there will be an opportunity for us all to meet after the service over a cup of tea.

We are engaged in a special project, in co-operation with the Japanese Lay Buddhist group, Rissho Kosei-kai, to extend the Week of Prayer for World Peace among all religions in every country of the world. Our own special co-operation in the UK with the British Council of Churches has had to be postponed for a year until they move into their new premises near Waterloo next November.

Prayer leaflets (possibly again including prayers for Northern Ireland) are available, price 12p each, £10 per 100 post free from WPWP, Wickham House, 10 Cleveland Way, London E1 4TR (01 790 2424).

Any donations, either individual or resulting from collections, will be most welcome in helping to maintain our organisation.

Exploring Dartmoor

Hilary Rudd

Monday: At 1pm five brave 'volunteers' sit huddled on Clevedon beach eating sandwiches in freezing weather. This is part of the 'Exploring Dartmoor on Foot' walking group making a halfway stop for lunch on the way down to Lindridge House, Kingsteignton, from Oxford and Newbury.

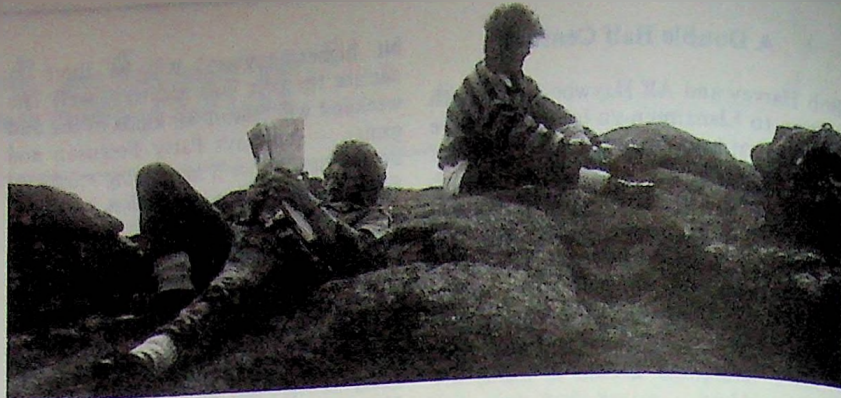
At 5pm the 'core-group' arrives at Lindridge and we are quickly lulled into a false sense of security by the two group leaders, Jane Douch and Colin Rudd. We are told that several people will be joining us for a couple of days during the week.

At 8pm after a positively delicious supper, the party sits down to what proves to be the week's game - Trivial Pursuit! The ladies - Jane, Hilary, Nicky and Evelyn, win amongst much hilarity.

Tuesday: The party walks around Lydford Gorge in the morning by way of introduction, and Jane is asked if she wishes to buy a National Trust Family Card. Much to her disgust, the man in the shop has assumed she is the mother of the party!

In the afternoon, the party start to walk on the moor proper. Two people, Colin and Evelyn, succeed in getting wet feet in the same stream. Colin, Mark and Hilary conquer their first Tor of the week, Great Mis, whilst Jane, Nicky and Evelyn go back to the car.

We return to Lindridge to find Robin Dunford waiting for us. He has come to join us for two days walking. The ladies win again at Trivial Pursuit.



Wednesday: We are joined today by Alan and Norman. Alan leads us ten miles around a reservoir. This is the day when the blisters appear, and that makes the part of 'The Bishop's Way' that we walk an interesting test of endurance. Evelyn proves that she can happily paddle in a fast-flowing Dartmoor stream of about four degrees centigrade! One or two others tentatively dip fingers and toes in and announce that it is so cold that it numbs their limbs within seconds.

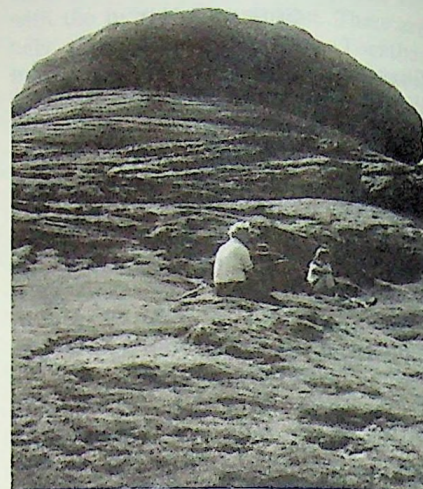
The party arrive back at the cars to paddle in yet another stream, and today it is my turn to get wet, falling flat on my back in the water whilst the men sit and laugh.

The evening game is switched to Five Stones (or Dibs) as the men are feeling utterly defeated at Trivial Pursuit. Philip shows off his skill, and Thrashes his opponent (me)!

Thursday: The party splits into two groups. Robin, Colin, Mark and Hilary walk 16 miles, and takes in six Tors in hot and windy weather; the more sensible members of the party, Evelyn, Jane, Nicky and our two new members, Daphne and Mary, undertake a day of several short walks.

Colin and Mark manage to scramble up Middle Tor the difficult way - up the rock face, whilst Robin and Hilary decide it is easier and quicker to walk round the base of the Tor. They are right!

The party return to Lindridge to eat by far the largest meal of the week, and the ladies win once again at Trivial Pursuit! It is decided that the teams are definitely unfair - three men against six women!



Friday: The last full day of walking arrives; Robin must now leave us, and is much missed by all members of the party. Today we walk - or rather bog-hop from Fatherford Viaduct to Culver Steps. Three of the party tackled Belstone Tor while the rest of us shelter from the wind. After lunch we set off on the second part of the day's walk, some of us climbing Row Tor on the way.

Part of the evening is spent in the traditional Lindridge House way for the last night of any week, in a quiet evening when people bring books, poems or prayers to read to the other members of the group.

Saturday: The party do the housework and an hour's gardening activity in the morning. Sid, the house cat, looks on with interest, and pounces on a few unsuspecting gardeners. We make a splendid bonfire, then all troop down to a nearby beach, where Mark and Colin try to teach others to play 'Ducks and Drakes'. After lunch, the party departs and Colin, Mark, Nicky, Evelyn, Hilary and the luggage all pile into the car and start the long haul home.

During the week people who have been drawn together from all walks of life have become remarkably close. All members of the group, I feel, must look back on the week with happy memories. Surely this week has fulfilled one of the aims of Toc H - to bring people together in friendship.

Personality Point

The following new members were registered during May / June:

Richard J Payton, Miss Alison Payton (Bracknell Action (J) Grp), Jason Carlton, Miss Gill Lurie, Ernest Puremont, Mrs Gwendoline Puremont (Bramley J), Mrs Phyllis E Corrick (Chard J), John Thomas (Corwen M), Mrs Joyce Willis (Deal and Walmer J), Douglas Morgan (Fleet J), Mrs Eileen Hunt (Hitchin W), Mrs Gweneth Clarke (Kidsgrove W), Mrs Lily Farr (Norwich W), Peter R Ashton (St Annes on Sea J), Mrs Joan Bilton, Neil Coates, Stewart Davies, Robert Gregory, Mrs Joyce Ingledew, Derek Mason, Mrs Olive M Spours (Saltburn J Grp), Walter C Precey, Mrs Joyce K Precey (Seaford J), George Turner (Sociability Plus (Walsall) Grp), Mrs Clara Aldridge (Springfields District), Albert Ghekiere, Marcel Logghe (Swans Poperinge J Grp)

Welcome to 27 new members.

Farewell

to Mary Hawken who, for many years, has typeset not only all the material for Point Three, but also all those Regional magazines, forms of service, books, booklets — indeed, almost everything which comes to Headquarters to be printed! Successive Editors of Point Three have been grateful for her painstaking help. There is no doubt that we shall miss her.

Welcome

to Christopher Astridge, who takes over from Mary Hawken. Chris is entirely new to the job, but is learning very quickly. He has also helped to lower the average age at Headquarters by an appreciable amount!



Forthcoming Events

August

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|--------|---|------|
| 1 - 8 | Project 35. Basingstoke 'Extraordinary' | Open |
| | Project 36. Cuffley Capers | Open |
| | Project 37. St Michael's Cheshire Home, Axbridge, Somerset | Open |
| | Project 75. Painting Week, Alison House | Open |
| 1 - 9 | Project 38. Trinity Centre, Birmingham; Residential Project with Homeless Men | Open |
| 8 - 15 | Project 39. Caring Holiday in South West Cornwall | Open |
| | Project 40. Token Treat | Open |
| | Project 41. Holiday with Mentally Handicapped Children, Mundesley, Norfolk | Open |
| | Project 76. Holiday Week at Alison House | Open |
| 8 - 16 | Project 42. Decades | Open |
| 8 - 22 | Project 43. Holiday with Mentally Handicapped Adults, Mundesley, Norfolk | Open |
| | Project 44. Holiday with Mentally Handicapped Adults, Poperinge, Belgium | Open |
| 15- 22 | Open Holiday Week, Cuddesdon | Open |
| | Project 46. Super Project '87 - 1 - Gadding about in Gwynedd | Open |
| | Project 47. Super Project '87 - 2 - Messing about in Menai | Open |
| | Project 50. South Wales (Mid Glamorgan) Valley Community Project | Open |
| 15- 24 | Project 48. Colsterdale Scramble | Open |
| 17- 28 | Project 49. Idle (Bradford) Handicapped Children's Playscheme | Open |
| 22- 29 | Project 51. Super Project '87 - 3 - Goreuon Y Gogs! | Open |
| | Project 52. Super Project '87 - 4 - Sensible in Snowdonia | Open |
| | Project 77. Holiday Week at Alison House | Open |

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|--------|---|------|
| 22- 31 | Project 88. Taizé | Open |
| 24- 30 | Project 53. Buggles and Friends from Birmingham | Open |

September

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|--------|--|------|
| 4 - 6 | Project 54. Last Chance at Lecky Lake | Open |
| 5 - 12 | Project 55. A week with a difference - Calderstones Hospital, Whalley, Nr Blackburn, Lancs. Min age 18 | Open |
| 11- 13 | Project 89. International Youth Weekend, Poperinge, Belgium | Open |
| 11- 18 | Project 56. Living and Loving as a Family Min age 18 | Open |
| 12- 19 | Project 57. Steaming up a Railway Track | Open |
| 13 | Cuddesdon House Open Day | Open |
| 18- 20 | Project 58. Holiday with Physically Handicapped Children, Mundesley, Norfolk | Open |
| 25- 27 | Quiet Weekend, Alison House | Open |
| | Inter-Faith Weekend, Cuddesdon | Open |
| 26 | South West Regional Council | |

October

- | | | |
|--------|---|------|
| 3 | Colsterdale Open Day | Open |
| 9 - 11 | Project 59. Come to Cuddesdon | Open |
| 17 | Southern Regional Council | |
| 23- 25 | Notts and Derby Area Weekend Alison House | |
| 24 | North Wales & North Western Regional Council | |
| 24- 31 | Project 73b. Painting and Music, Cuddesdon (new date) | Open |
| 26 - | Project 78. Shades of Autumn | |
| 1 Nov | Alison House | Open |

The Story of

TRINITY CE

Back in 1970 in Birmingham a Soup Run was launched by Toc H. By the provision of soup and bread it was possible to make contact with the homeless men in the city centre. Started on the basis of one night a week, it soon operated for several nights and the homeless men knew where to gather – the bus station – to wait for the arrival of the young folk. The consciences of the latter were stirred when, after saying good night, they returned to their own beds while the 'dossers' tried to keep warm wherever they could. So surveys and discussions were held while attempts were made without success to find some form of shelter.

Then the Roman Catholic Archbishop, having seen the Soup Run at work as he was returning home one night, offered the use of the Crypt at St Chad's Cathedral. An exciting period followed when we made contact with St Chad's Administrator, sought help from the City, set about getting the minimum essential equipment and appointing the first full time member of staff. At this stage we formed a Committee – John Mitchell, now the Director of Toc H, Don Biswell, now Chairman of Trinity Centre, Hilary Geater and myself (all Toc H) together with representatives of the statutory bodies, the Samaritans and, of course, the Administrator of St Chad's – now Bishop of Elmham.

In faith, since our funds were almost non-existent, we opened on 1 May 1971 and continued to use the Crypt until January 1978. Provision of soup, bread and tea, a mattress on the floor, and

blankets did not deter the men who queued from an early evening hour for admission. Health and safety regulations limited our number to 30 and we in turn had to limit each man to a maximum of three successive nights in any week. At 8am the Crypt was cleared and the men went their several ways. Voluntary helpers (Toc H and others) did a magnificent job in assisting our full time worker in what was essentially a Night Shelter. Soon one of the financial benefactors challenged us to make further provision by day since otherwise in his view we were simply perpetuating the problem. We tried, but finances and lack of premises made a Day Centre with rehabilitation facilities non-viable and we were back operating a Night Shelter only. As a Committee we became registered with the Charity Commissioners, having a Constitution which stated as our aim: *'To relieve poverty, hardship and mental and physical distress among persons who are or may be homeless, vagrant or alcoholic in the City of Birmingham'*. In January 1978 a fire occurred in the Crypt and for two years we carried on in cold, unsuitable and temporary premises until in 1980 we were offered a redundant and despoiled Church – Holy Trinity at Camp Hill, Bordesley. We moved into the Victorian building, consecrated in 1835 and now listed as of historical and architectural interest. An architect soon produced plans for the interior and with the assistance of Birmingham Inner City Partnership and many generous donations from firms, trusts and private individuals, work began on the conversion into three floors and the restoration of the Crypt.

Work on the third floor is yet to be completed, together with modifications for the dining and kitchen areas.

We are now known as Trinity Centre (Birmingham) and are shortly to become a limited company with the present Committee as the first Governors. With such extensive accommodation we are able to provide a variety of services and some of our pipe dreams are turning into reality.

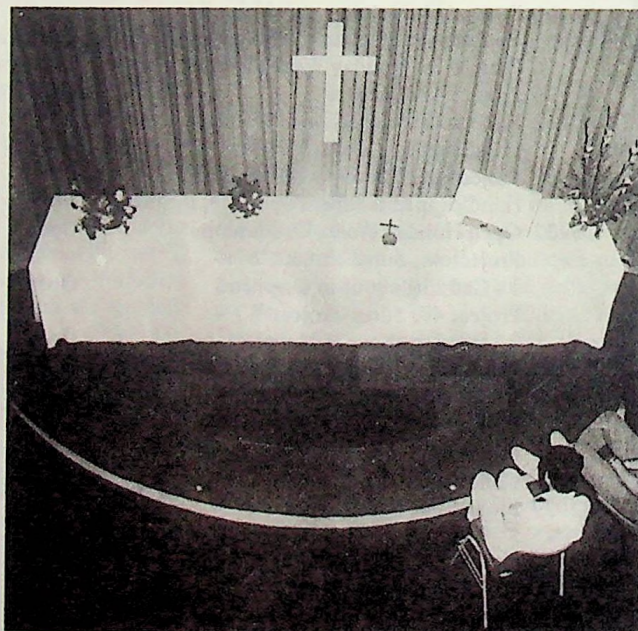
So we offer a Night Shelter for about 50 men – all homeless, some alcoholics, some with psychiatric disorders and some compulsive gamblers. Of these a number stay two or three nights and the rest may remain for several months at a time. We now provide beds in the Night Shelter not just mattresses on the floor, and gradually we are arranging for individual lockers.

How does it work?

A man on admission is given a warm drink, a bath, a change of clothing, food and a bed. The next morning after breakfast he can seek advice and further help from the staff. He is free to go out or to go up to the first floor to the Day Centre. Here he can sit, read, play games and watch TV or he can avail himself of help from an Alcoholic Counsellor, an Art Therapist and a Remedial Educationalist. On this floor there are several small rooms, where in private much help can be given and where often a sharing of problems takes place.



The Centre



The Quiet Room

ENTRE (Birmingham)

Rose Radford



A Group counselling session



A corner of the Rehabilitation Unit

Men often come to us with certain physical problems — sore and blistered feet, heavy colds, skin ailments or needing help with diabetic treatment. For these men we have on the first floor a six-bedded Sick Bay, professionally staffed and adjoining a Surgery where a visiting doctor attends for a weekly session and where another doctor will give help as required in the sphere of psychiatry.

The floor above now houses a ten-bedded Rehabilitation Unit. After due consultation with the Director and with the Head of the Unit a man can move up here for an unspecified time, following an individual programme suitable to himself. He receives food, comfort, help and advice, leading to the development of self-confidence (so often lacking) and then on to that measure of independence, when he can, if desired become the tenant of a council flat or similar accommodation. His links with Trinity Centre do not end there and he is encouraged to return, to chat and to share experiences. Even after a period in the Rehabilitation Unit, some men find the transfer from the group too traumatic, which suggests a further development in the future of some second stage supervised accommodation away from the Centre. One man who after a period here went on to his own flat wrote an article to encourage others.

I quote from it: *'You can get out of life what you care to put into it. And this is what I have to say about Trinity Centre . . . We all get on well together (ie. in the Rehabilitation Unit) . . . to me this little unit was and always will be a caring and sharing with each other . . . But I grew up at Trinity'.*

He also sent for inclusion in the Centre magazine practical advice as to how to manage a new flat. Sadly he died in September 1986. Together with Staff and residents I am proud to have known

him. Another man from the Unit, again with a flat of his own, was able while with us to use his artistic talent and is now attending full-time one of the City's Colleges of Art.

The Wet Centre, at present operated in the Crypt, is the only one of its kind in the country. Originally it was funded by the Home Office and it is here that the police bring drunken men rather than put them through the process of caution and arrest, with all its consequences of court appearances, fines and records. When the men have sobered up they can receive some counselling prior to discharge or transfer to the Night Shelter. This facet of our work requires qualified nurses for 24 hours a day.

The physical needs of the men are the concern of the Catering Department, led by a Catering Manager with two qualified assistant chefs and with help from men in the Rehabilitation Unit and the Night Shelter, for all of whom this is valuable training. Breakfast seven days a week, six evening meals and lunch on Sunday are provided together with sandwiches for those in the Day Centre. The menus are most imaginative, a new meal is introduced each month and the needs of vegetarians and those in the Sick Bay are individually met. Help is also given by the Catering Manager to those in the Rehabilitation Unit in learning simple culinary skills for themselves. Baths, laundry provision and a clothing store are further aids to the physical needs of our men.

Trinity Centre as the name implies, is concerned with the full threefold development of men. We have, on the ground floor at the east end of the building and stretching unhindered to the roof, the Chapel or Quiet Room, suitably furnished by local churches. Here a monthly Sunday service is held and we hope more useful development will take place.

Running Trinity Centre is a very costly exercise — we do receive accommodation charges from the DHSS, together with generous grants from the City and donations. Our expenses are headed by Staff Salaries, followed by the usual demands of rates, heat, light and water etc.

The Centre has a staff of 24. The Administration is headed by the Director, and involves Heads of Departments, Management Teams and Sub-Committees. There is also a monthly meeting of the Committee, which will shortly become the Board of Governors.

Visitors to the Centre are welcome — we are closely linked with the statutory and voluntary bodies in the City; we provide opportunities for Neighbourhood Workers of the Housing Department to gain experience with us; we welcome each year the Winant volunteers, and we are grateful for the short term Toc H projects which take place from time to time.

Before writing this article, I sought time with some of the leading staff members and experienced a most encouraging and reassuring response. It is so easy to become completely absorbed in administration but this is NOT the case with our staff — the men are the first and final consideration. The staff are caring and compassionate, always having time to respond to the man in his present state, whatever it might be. This is aptly borne out by the man who said *'I can get help here'*. Above all they see Trinity Centre as an opportunity to carry out the Second Commandment — Love your neighbour as yourself.

I feel very privileged to have been associated with Trinity Centre and before that St Chad's Crypt, but as I look out on the state of the world, I realise there is no time for complacency. As Cecil Rhodes said: *'So little done; so much to do'.*

We will Remember...

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In April

Webster J Davidson (Vancouver)
Peter Harris (Kent Weekend Project)
Albert H Warren (Vancouver)

In May

Alexander Arneil (Coupar Angus)
Fred R Bristow-Smith (High Brooms)
Iris Galt (Trimley)
Joyce Gardiner (Newcastle West)
Alice W Hardingham (Richmond – Surrey)
Edna M Jones (Mold)
Margaret R Parmenter (Sudbury)
Joan A L Pittwell (Lodden Vale District)
George B Plimmer (late Mold)
H W 'Bert' Short (Springfields District)

In June

Vera E M Inglis (Tayforth District)
Winifred J Sansom (Bognor Regis)
Doris E Timms (Bournemouth and Christchurch)
Rose Turnbull (Strode Park & Herne)

Not previously recorded

Edgar A Cabot (North Devon District)
Hilda M Child (Beds & North Herts District)
Victor R Collins (Loddon Vale District)
Victor Dye (Springfields District)
Kenneth L Manns (Springfields District)
Sarah L Martin (Medway & Sheppey District)
Sidney E Rayner (Huddersfield District)
Walter Slate (South East Essex District)
William H Thompson (Thanet District)

It is with deepest sorrow that Bramley, Leeds Joint Branch records the death of one of its founder members Arnold (Arnie) White. Several years ago he retired and moved to Grassington in the Yorkshire Dales, but he will be remembered by all who loved and respected him. He unselfishly devoted his life to the welfare and caring of the people in this community, holding the position of Branch Chairman and also being appointed Honorary President.

JP

Bert Smith was a deeply valued member of Cambridge Branch, having held every office in the Branch. At the time of his death he had been Branch Secretary for many years – a job which he had done in a characteristically thorough, but quiet and confident manner. He had also been a Central Councillor and had many contacts throughout Toc H. His Christian beliefs and a deep faith were his hidden glory, and his loss is a great one to all his 'family' and friends. We rejoice that we knew and loved him.

GH

Peter Harris was a Project Leader of Kent Weekend Projects Branch and a keen member of Toc H. He first came into Toc H projects in the Southern Region and moved to the South Eastern Region about 1980. Peter died tragically on 30 April and a Memorial Service was held in Southborough (Tonbridge) on 22 May attended by over 50 people and over a dozen Toc H members. Peter was trained as a nurse and worked in a Psychiatric Hospital at Hildenborough, Kent. He was a very caring, conscientious and reliable person and a confirmed Christian. Since 1980 he has been involved in Toc H Projects in Kent – both weekend projects and summer holiday projects. Children loved him. His tragic death is a sad loss for Toc H of the future. He was only 25 years of age. His wife Ann was also a Toc H member and they had a little daughter aged about two years.

MBP

Nan McQueen was one of those who came into Toc H membership by way of Service Clubs, where she experienced the special warmth of fellowship which gave her confidence in the strange places to which her husband was posted. So much did this mean to her that when at last they were able to settle down at home she found the nearest Toc H Branch and found the same warmth of acceptance and soon became a member. When the Branch went through the difficulty of losing their home and having to change to daytime meetings Nan's encouragement was a strength and her love for the Movement drew friends in to share its life. Latterly she fought pain and illness for years, struggling back to meetings whenever possible, till at last her heart gave out. We of the Edinburgh Branch will miss her gentle strength tremendously.

FMB

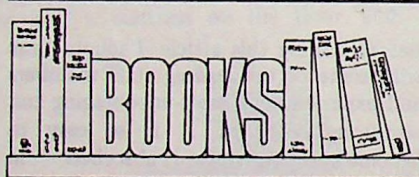
Fred Bristow-Smith, who was a stalwart member of High Brooms, passed away peacefully in his sleep recently. He was a keen gardener and before retirement was a master builder, being chief Clerk of Works to Tonbridge Urban Council. For several years Fred was people's warden and youth club leader at St Luke's Church, Tunbridge Wells. He will be greatly missed by all his colleagues at the Branch.

WH

Alice Hardingham, who died at the end of May, had been treasurer of Richmond Joint Branch and the Cromwell District for about 20 years. She had previously been a member of Dartford Ladies Branch. She had been the organist at the East Sheen Baptist Church until her last illness, and helped at RHHI at Putney. Alice will be missed very much by all who knew and worked with her.

SW

At the age of sixty-five Vera Inglis seemed to have packed two or three spans into her life. Being a keen Girl Guide she became a



'Yes to Life' by David Clark
Published by Fount Paperbacks @ £2.95

'In search of the kingdom community.'

Writing in Point Three in January 1985 in his review of 'The Liberation of the Church', Ken Prideaux-Brune said 'this is not quite the book which David Clark has it in him to write'. Dare I suggest that, in 'Yes to Life', David Clark has now written that book.

This is a very personal account of one man's continuing pilgrim journey 'in search of the kingdom community'. While it covers much the same ground as 'The

Liberation of the Church' the personalised style makes it more readable and the smaller number of examples of kingdom communities makes it less cluttered. 'Yes to Life' has that prophetic eloquence for me which Ken Prideaux-Brune found missing in the earlier book and which 'the theme cries out for'.

The kingdom community offers life, liberation and unity to the secular world. On offer is nothing less than the energy which the kingdom community derives from the Trinity of God the Creator of Life, Christ the Liberator and the Holy Spirit the Unifier. Such a message is painful for a divided and institutionalised Church, in much need of recreation if it is to make any impact in this secular world. The Church can no longer 'see itself as synonymous with, rather than the servant and herald of the kingdom community'.

By David Clark definitions, where Toc H continues 'to witness humbly' to that which is spiritual in every man, it is part of the kingdom community engaged in networking in a secular world. But while networking has been seen as important in the past it is no longer seen as enough. 'The development of an identifiable and purposeful movement is now a human and divine imperative'. David Clark sees this imperative as a new role for the National Centre for Christian Communities and Networks (NACCCAN) of which he is Director. The new role for NACCCAN is seen as 'helping to transform society into the kingdom of God' and '(striving) to build a Church which is servant and herald of that kingdom'.

While I happily count myself as one of the fellow travellers 'in search of the kingdom community' to whom 'Yes to

Editor's Note:

Due to pressure of space, the Editor usually has to reduce the length of tributes sent in – and will continue to do so unless the author specifically requests 'All or nothing'!

District Commissioner for some years; she was secretary of Clan Murray, was interested in the Edinburgh Medical Mission, especially its work in Tiberius, visited friends in the Mission Field in India, and for many years had been Secretary for Toc H Scotland.

In this latter capacity she became well known amongst the membership through attendance at Central Council and through the very generous use of her home for hospitality to Toc H visitors and for meetings when needed. Above all she kept together the scattered Scottish Branches by her meticulous records of Executive business and the planning of the annual weekend Conference.

She was unusually gifted with clever fingers, her home being filled with perfect handwork of all kinds, she and a daughter taking it in turns to win the first prize for entries in the annual Royal Highland Show. Belonging to the Scottish Handicraft Circle she was jointly responsible for a small craft group at her church. She is a tremendous loss to us all, not only to Toc H Scotland.

FB

Rose Turnbull, a member of the Strode Park and Herne Branch in Kent was an example and an inspiration to all who knew her and to many who did not. She was 69 when she died, having spent all her life in a wheelchair, and had been a resident at Strode Park Home for the Disabled at Herne Bay for 40 years. She had built up a personal philosophy in life which saw her bright, cheerful and considerate. She became known to many local residents for her humour and urge to help others. *'I have had more time for thinking by being unable to walk around'* she wrote in her book, *'Silver Linings'*. *'So I think of others and how, perhaps, I can help them. Look for the silver lining. Don't throw in the towel. I am always saying this when I see someone is down. It isn't easy trying to help others. But it must be done.'*

BB

We give thanks for their lives

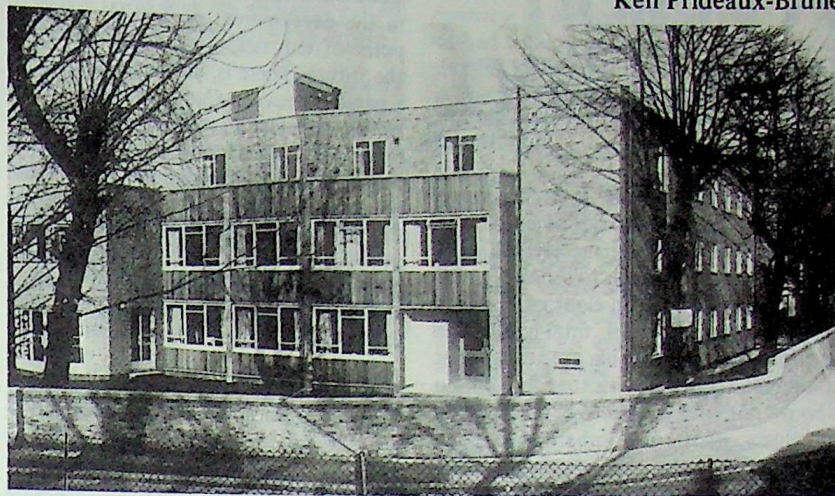
Life' is dedicated, I still find myself unclear about either the role seen for that recreated Church or its servant relationship to the kingdom community. Maybe clarity will come as we travel on and as NACCCAN develops its new role. It will also be interesting to see how this embryo Christian community movement prevents itself from becoming institutionalised.

Certainly 'Yes to Life' is a book for Toc H members witnessing humbly to the faith that is in them, for it challenges us to share in a task which has been at the heart of our Movement from its earliest days. We need only to look again at our Four Points of the Compass to confirm that Toc H, while it remains true to those high aims, is all about the kingdom community which David Clark describes.

Robin Dunford

PRIDEAUX HOUSE A Vision is Fulfilled

Ken Prideaux-Brune



Twenty-five years ago Toc H opened its first (and only) purpose built Mark. Prideaux House in Hackney. Fifteen years ago Friends Anonymous Service was born, under the leadership of Rev Gualter de Mello, who had for eight years been warden of the Mark. Five years ago the Mark closed and Toc H made it possible for Friends Anonymous to take over Prideaux House, its birthplace. On 31 May a great crowd of people who had known and loved Prideaux House came together to celebrate these joint birthdays

The history of that quarter of a century has, of course, had its painful moments. Looking back, however, we can surely see a pattern that was not seen – or intended – at the time. Friends Anonymous is a Toc H offspring that has achieved its independence without losing its affection for the family; and five years ago it took over the family house. Prideaux House is still doing the job it was created to do and probably doing it more effectively than at any time in its history.

At the heart of Friends Anonymous is a small community of people who have

committed a period of their lives to working full-time for the area. Their tasks are many – the house has an old people's lunch club, a play group and a youth centre, together with a 24 hour telephone service for anybody in the area with a problem. But the job can be summed up in the word 'host'. The members of the community offer a welcome to all the many people who come to the house, and cater for their needs

For the house is above all a place of meeting, a place where people, whatever their age, whatever their race, whatever their faith, are welcomed and made to feel that they are of value. Some come because they are in need of one kind or another, some to offer help, some to learn. Study days are held when groups from more affluent areas can come to learn about the escalating spiral of deprivation in our inner cities.

In the past Friends Anonymous has received substantial backing from the borough of Hackney. Now, however, it has become quietly convinced that it must move to a position of financial

/contd p 12



Photo: Bob Broeder

PRIDEAUX HOUSE A Vision is Fulfilled

continued

self-sufficiency so that it is no longer dependent on the vagaries of politicians. It already has one very successful charity shop and plans to open two more. It has also converted the top floor of Prideaux House into a kind of mini-hotel. Ten comfortable single rooms are available, at commercial rates, to visitors to London who do not wish to spend their money on the glossy, plastic atmosphere of so much that is offered by the tourist trade. If you need overnight accommodation in London — or can offer good second-hand clothing, bric-a-brac or furniture for sale in the charity shop — you can contact Friends Anonymous at Prideaux House, 10 Church Crescent, London, E9 7DL, (01 968 2233).

Prideaux House began with a vision. As Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother expressed it when she opened the house 25 years ago: 'Diverse creeds and races will live together in a spirit of human comradeship'. That vision remains and day by day, in many different ways, it is being fulfilled by Friends Anonymous.

Cuddesdon House

Cuddesdon House is a significant element in the development of Toc H — a focal point of expression and a key factor for the future. There is, indeed, something of a parallel between Cuddesdon and Talbot House. One has its roots in our past, but both are of importance in the present and future of our Movement. Cuddesdon can become a centre and focal point for Toc H's life, helping to give expression to what already is, as well as enabling new initiatives to take place. It is a place where dynamism can grow, and feed into Toc H's activities.

JAG Lawrence
Birmingham

I simply cannot understand why members of Toc H do not make more use of Cuddesdon House. I am told that it is seldom used to anything like its capacity. Here we have a priceless asset — how many Movements would give their all to possess such a Centre.

A few months ago a 'Holiday Break' was advertised in 'Point Three' for a week commencing 23 May. Thinking that there would be a great demand for such a chance of a holiday like that, I immediately booked a place for my wife and me.

I needn't have worried so much;

only five of us turned up. We had the place to ourselves and had a simply wonderful time. Again and again we said 'This is just the sort of holiday we've always wanted'. Peace and quiet, apart from the singing of birds and the quarterly striking of the Church clock across the way. The food was excellent; we had a wonderful hostess in Anne Evans (what a lovely lady she is!).

We made new Toc H friends from Norwich, we visited friends in the Cotswolds, and one day even went to Yorkshire and back, having time to spend at least four hours with friends around Barnsley and Huddersfield, thanks to the M1.

We observed Ascension Day properly with a celebration of Holy Communion in the Study, and on the same day a party of Epileptics was entertained at the House.

We spent hours sitting in the sun-filled garden and just talking or reading. We remarked on more than one occasion how much easier it was to reach Cuddesdon than it had ever been to get to dear old Dor Knap. And the total cost was about half what one would have paid in a hotel! (And probably better service.)

This is of course not the first time my wife and I have visited Cuddesdon House; as members of the Bordon Company we have been there before, and it certainly won't be the last.



Prideaux House

The Community and Fellowship of
Friends Anonymous Service

Prideaux House is not a hotel, nor a boarding house, nor a hostel. It is the home of a community of people who have found their faith in God very real and relevant.

Our aim is to offer good quality accommodation in a homely atmosphere for that short break in London, near the West End, theatres, shops, museums and concerts. Ideally suited for persons attending conferences, courses, business meetings, interviews, and for those in need of relaxation. Perfect for groups or persons wanting peace and quiet.

Accommodation is offered in The Stanley Coulson Wing of our Community House and Centre in ten single (only) rooms, and all proceeds support our work in Hackney.

Each bedroom has a very high standard of furnishing with own wash-basin. There are good shower facilities, lounges, TV Room, small garden and the Community Chapel. Wholesome cooking is the norm. Sadly, accommodation is not suitable for children, smokers and persons on specific orthodox diets.

For further information contact:

The Rev Gualter R de Mello, Prideaux House, Ecumenical Interfaith Centre,
10 Church Crescent, London, E9 7DL. Telephone: 01 986 2233.

(If writing, state name of paper, quoting 'ACC/87'.)

Alison House Quiet Weekend

25 – 27 September

Leader: The Rev Colin Rudd

Cost: £27.60

Enquiries and applications
(+ £5 deposit) to:

The Rev C R Rudd,
Toc H HQ, 1 Forest Close
Wendover, Aylesbury,
Bucks HP22 6BT.

Tel: 0296 (Wendover) 623911

Opinions expressed in these columns (including any editorial comment) are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement. We reserve the right to edit letters. Only letters carrying the correspondent's full name and address will be considered for publication.

As a place to relax and act as a holiday centre it must be as good as anywhere; so far as we were concerned it was just what we wanted. Why, oh why, is it not filled to capacity every week in the summer, or indeed, whenever a special or holiday week is planned!

Arthur Collins
Southampton

A Wholesome Rhythm in Life

'... We acknowledge and give thanks for the rhythm of life on which we depend:

*'the season of the year, for seed time and harvest;
the ebb and flow of the tide;
day and night, for work and rest;
and that there must be a rhythm of life for each of us;
of silence and speaking;
of intake and output;
of worship and action;
of detachment from and involvement in the noise and demands of living in a community.*

This extract from Joyful Journey, Day 15 reminds me today of the need to use opportunities for quiet and detachment which are offered to us. They do not occur often in the course of our busy lives, but there will be another

opportunity at the Quiet Weekend at Alison House from 25 - 27 September - which I will now try and avail myself of - and venture to commend to others.

Rudolf Loewy
Harrow

Recruiting members

Many of our Branches are getting elderly. I think a useful recruiting area is pensioner groups. The younger retired have many years of useful service before them, and many want to be of service to others.

We should let every Branch have speakers notes and have an evening of fun every so often finding out who can put across our Toc H message to outside groups. I'm sure we should find speaking talent from unlikely quarters, with encouragement.

Fred Bailey
Bideford

Secretary - suddenly died her family wanted us to have donations given in her memory in lieu of flowers, to do as we wished with it, and we decided some of it should buy some more trees for the village in India. Here is part of the reply we received from Interlock.

'We are asking our Committee to set aside a special plot for all the trees from Mold Toc H in memory of Edna Jones. This could be a wonderful way in helping to plant trees on a grand scale - so many lives can be improved by planting trees in desert places. Edna Jones will live on for ever. God works in some very special ways and this could be His "planting of an idea" for something beautiful for the poor. We would love to expand this idea to our other villages. Would you please like to help us?' - and so I pass on this invitation to help in this special way to our readers of Point Three.

Gwyn Harvey
Mold

'Interlock'

Our Branch in Mold recently decided to take up Ken Prideaux-Brune's idea to help Interlock and we sent money to buy ten trees for their village - Bethel - to be also 'watered for life'. When our dear friend Edna Jones - our Branch

In the June issue of Point Three we printed a letter from Vera Jones. The last sentence of the second paragraph of her letter should have read: 'She says she will *not* denude Europe of nuclear protection . . .' and not 'She says she will denude Europe etc'. We apologise for the error. - Ed.

Toc H Centre

COLSTERDALE Open Day

Saturday, 3 October 1987
11am to 4pm

You are welcome to come and inspect the centre, including its recent programme of improvements. Display of the Centre's usage over the past summer. Raffle with prizes.

Buffet lunch available at £1.25 per head.

Tickets from: John Dunwell (Development Officer), Toc H Centre, Colsterdale, Masham, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 4NN. Tel: 0756 (Ripon) 89382.

Toc H International Youth Weekend in Poperinge, Belgium

11 - 13 September 1987



Come and spend a weekend with people from other countries - a time for thought, a time to learn more about each other and a time to have fun!

The Group will live in Talbot House, Poperinge (which is the birthplace of Toc H and will have the chance to visit some historic sites in Flanders fields. There will be discussions on Toc H, peace, and war, in the light of your own experience and cultural difference.

Everyone's thoughts and contributions are warmly welcomed - so why wait?

APPLY NOW TO:

Judi Edwards, Toc H HQ, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT.
with a £5 deposit to secure your place.

Total Cost: £40 (incl travel) UK volunteers
£10 (overseas volunteers)
(Possible reduction for unwaged)

Trading for a Fairer World

Anne Morton

In Britain, getting a job. Worldwide, famine and poverty. These are the issues that a recent survey found were of most concern to young people today. It is perhaps hardly surprising that one organisation which has sought to deal with these issues in a unique way has been growing by an average 30% each year since it began. Traidcraft will have a turnover this year of £3.5 million in products which come from the Third World and whose sale will in some part help make the terms of trade fairer between the rich and poor.

Traidcraft was started in 1979. It now produces several mail order catalogues each year with a range of goods which include clothing, tea, coffee, jewellery, recycled paper and general craft items. More than 1,000 items from 30 countries imported from community groups who are seeking to provide reasonable working conditions and fair wages. Traidcraft employs 120 people at its Gateshead headquarters and its work provides employment for between 3-4,000 worldwide. It has strong links with the major development organisations such as Christian Aid, Cafod and Oxfam but surprisingly is not a charity.

In 1984 Traidcraft became a public limited company and now has more than 3,000 shareholders. However there could hardly be a bigger contrast between Traidcraft's approach and that of Telecom, TSB or British Gas. In its recent prospectus those intending to buy were warned 'this is not an investment for personal gain or profit'. Traidcraft has paid modest dividends but its shareholders regard it as a 'good' investment in that they are supporting a company that puts people before profit and is seeking to provide opportunities for the underprivileged to develop through fair trade.

To back this up Traidcraft tries to be an 'alternative' company in several important aspects. There is a wage policy for its UK staff which keeps differentials low. This means that the lowest wages are considerably better than in comparable jobs locally but the higher paid jobs are heavily discounted. All staff get the same benefits and there is as much involvement of staff in the management process as possible. Traidcraft also has a specifically Christian basis to its work. In its objectives the company states that it will 'expand and establish more just trading systems which will express the principle of love and justice fundamental to the Christian faith'.

In practice what does Traidcraft's work mean? For people in this country it often means a lot of hard work! There are more than 1,000 voluntary representatives for Traidcraft, often based in local churches, all over Britain. They sell through coffee mornings, market stalls, special events, at schools, in the office, in fact anywhere. But there's more to it than just selling because Traidcraft is concerned that we should know about the people behind the products. There is a big range of support material from videos to leaflets explaining how the products were made and giving details about the lives of the producers. In this way it is felt that a real link can be established between a customer in this country and a craftsman overseas. When this happens then we begin to look on someone in the Third World not as an object of our charity but as a person trying to earn a living like ourselves. Changing attitudes is all-important and it has to start at home.

Overseas the Traidcraft producer will see benefits in a variety of ways. Maybe they will be able to get out of the clutches of the moneylender or middleman who have hitherto taken a huge cut at their expense.



A women's group in the Philippines making bags from banana fibre.

Maybe a small co-operative group will have extra technical input from Traidcraft which will enable it to improve its quality and sell its products more widely as a result. For the individual a steady income may mean such basic things as regular meals, a change of clothes, sending the children to school or being able to afford basic medical care.

But there is more to this process than just providing an income. Work means the development of a skill, growing confidence as a person, the ability to provide for a family and keep it together. Most of Traidcraft's producers are women and for them their status as income earners is much higher than as a domestic drudge. Money earned by women also tends to benefit the family more directly.

Traidcraft staff have brought back dozens of examples of change for the better in communities around the world as a result of having an opportunity to get a fair price for their work and produce. Huge changes are still needed and they really depend on the affluent in our world taking their responsibilities to heart. All political parties now agree that trade is more important than aid in helping developing countries but it must be trade as if people matter. This is Traidcraft's aim but there is still a long way to go.

Catalogues and details of how to become a Voluntary representative are available from:

**Anne Morton, Traidcraft plc,
Kingsway, Gateshead, NE11 0NE.**



Mohammed Islam, weaver in Kathira, Southern Bangladesh. Traidcraft has a catalogue featuring handloom garments.



Basket-making by a women's co-operative in central Bangladesh. Their work has enabled the building of a small medical centre for the village.

North London's Mini-Handi

John Burgess

District Branches are not renowned for getting much press at all, and when they do it is all too often commented that they were yet another good Toc H idea which never really got off the ground. Only a few, it seems, ever meet, and only a few ever do anything. So we're rather apt to write the whole thing off, and that's a mistake, because the few District Branches which do meet have a strong fellowship and do some very good jobs. One such District Branch is to be found in the North London District. On 20 June a lot of planning and hard work reached its fulfilment in a Mini Handi which at least one person who was there described as 'a fantastic success'.

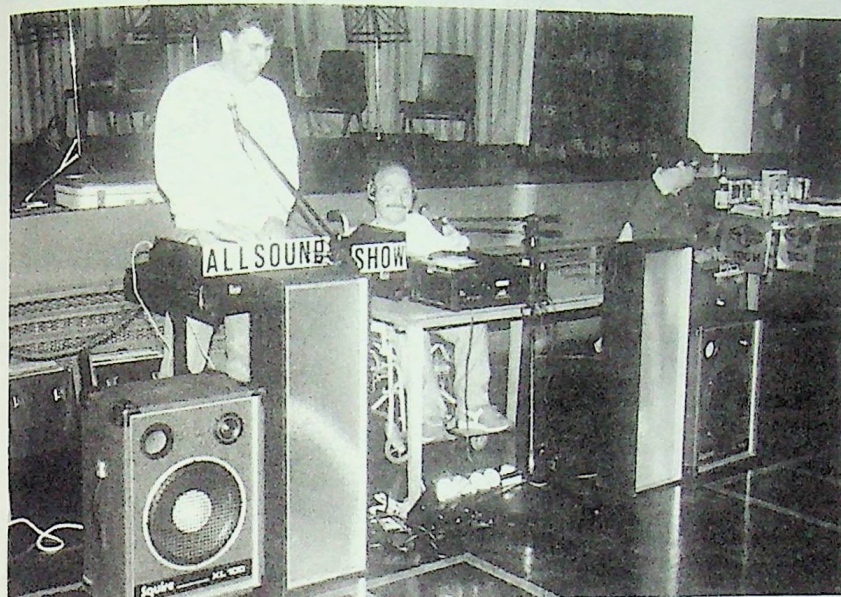
The evening was held at the Salisbury East School in Edmonton, North London. Fifty or so handicapped guests came from the Arnold House Cheshire Home, the British Rheumatism and Arthritis Club, the Monday Club for the Disabled, the Disabled Drivers Association, Tottenham PHAB, the Unity 70 Club, Central PHAB and pupils from the school. Other guests included the Mayor and Mayoress, Lord Graham, no less than two MPs, with the Headmaster and staff of the school.

A quite unexpected and happy coincidence occurred when the Disco arrived, for the DJ in the 'All Sounds

Roadshow' arrived in a wheelchair, himself a sufferer from spina bifida. It somehow gave an added dimension to the evening.

Many gifts had been given for the evening — including two signed 'T' shirts from Jimmy Savile — so there were lots of prizes, to say nothing of a free — yes, free! — raffle.

9pm came all too soon, with everyone very happy and hoping that the event will be repeated next year — and I'm sure that if the North London District Branch have anything to do with it, it will.



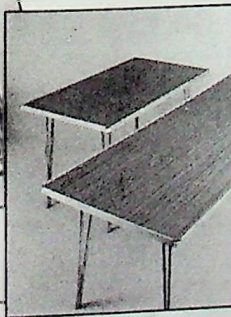
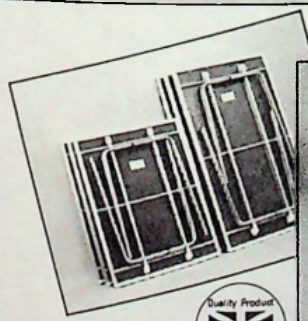
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above all

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Adrian Dudman

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or telephone her on 08677 (Wheatley) 2004

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